

ONE THOUSAND DAYS

**Start Small. Stay Consistent.
Build a Life That Lasts.**

SCOTTY PRIEST

ONE THOUSAND DAYS

WHAT COULD CHANGE
IF YOU STAYED CONSISTENT?



Hey Friend,

I'm really glad you picked up this book.

My hope is simple: that over these days, you would experience God in a real and personal way. Not just in big, dramatic moments, but in the small, everyday steps that actually shape our lives.

So much of what we want — growth, change, deeper faith — doesn't happen all at once. It happens little by little. Day by day. Choice by choice.

That's what this journey is about.

You don't have to have it all figured out. You don't have to make massive changes overnight. Just take the next step. Then the next one after that.

My prayer is that as you move through these pages, God would meet you right where you are ... and lead you forward into who He's calling you to become.

Take your next step,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Scotty Priest'. The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of 'Scotty' and 'Priest' being capitalized and prominent.

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**CHANGE
DOESN'T
HAPPEN
OVERNIGHT.**

**IT HAPPENS
DAILY**

”

INTRODUCTION

I was out on a walk when a phrase caught my attention:

ONE THOUSAND DAYS

I had been listening to a podcast interview where the guest described his journey into competitive triathlons. He said he had dabbled in a few races, but it wasn't until a coach and friend challenged him with a simple idea that things really changed.

The coach asked him, *"Why don't you give this a go for 1,000 days?"*

The reasoning was simple: You can't really know if you like something, if you're gifted at it, or if you're truly willing to make the necessary sacrifices until you've given it that kind of consistent effort. A thousand days gives you enough time to find out.

When I heard that, I pressed pause. I finished my walk in silence, but my mind kept circling back to the idea.

A thousand days.

By the time I got home, I couldn't shake it. I opened my journal and began sketching out what this might look like for me.

What if I committed to a journey of small, intentional changes for 1,000 days? What would shift in my life? My faith? My relationships? My health? My work? My finances? My soul?

Here's what I wrote:

I'm considering an experience — an experiment, really. A challenge in focus, consistency, and change for 1,000 days.

One thousand days is just under three years. On one hand, that sounds like a long time.

On the other, in the grand scheme of life, it's not that long at all. But it's long enough to create real transformation. Long enough to reshape my soul, my health, my relationships, my mindset, my finances, and my work.

What if I was ruthlessly focused on things like:

- ▶ **Being the man I say I want to be.**
- ▶ **Being loving and present.**
- ▶ **Building the next phase of life with Amy, my wife.**
- ▶ **Establishing a new season of family life with our adult children.**
- ▶ **Reinventing my health. Being better at 50.**
- ▶ **Developing real friendships with a few men.**
- ▶ **Getting my financial house in order saving more, giving more.**
- ▶ **Shepherding my church and community with renewed vision.**

What if I put the blinders on and disappeared into obscurity for a season, focusing on this and only this? Here's the plan. I'm starting this journey on **Saturday, April 15, 2023**, and **finishing on Friday, January 9, 2026**. ***On that day, I'll be 50 years old.*** And here's my commitment: **10 small daily habits** Small enough to be doable every day. Simple enough that anyone could do them. But powerful enough that, over time, they could change everything.

MY TEN DAILY HABITS

- 1 Read the Bible**
- 2 Write in a journal**
- 3 Pray**
- 4 Write 100 words about this 1,000-day journey**
- 5 Move my body, work out**
- 6 Take vitamins/supplements**
- 7 Read 10 pages from a book**
- 8 No bread, no added sugar, no alcohol**
- 9 Drink one gallon of water**
- 10 Save \$10 per day**

The chapters in this book came out of that journey. It's about transformation, but not the flashy kind we often chase. It's about the slow, steady kind of change that actually lasts. Because here's what I've learned: Change is possible, but it only ever happens inch by inch, little by little, step by step.

We love miraculous moments. Instant turnarounds. Dramatic before-and-after stories. And yes, sometimes those happen. But more often, the miracle is found in the mundane.

The spark of inspiration is important — it gives us hope and vision for what could be. But the real magic happens in the grind, in the daily choices to move one step closer to a different kind of future.

I want to invite you into this with me.

A journey with Jesus that leads to the kind of change we're all longing for.

Maybe for you it's not 1,000 days.

Maybe it's just 21.

What if you picked one small habit?

Or three? Or even ten?

**Then practiced them,
everyday, for 21 days?**

You can start by writing your daily habits down

This book is laid out in 21 short chapters.

Just read one each day. My prayer is that these bite-sized thoughts will give you the encouragement, clarity, and practical tools to walk more closely with Jesus — the One who leads us into the good life He intends for us all.

See you tomorrow for Day 1.

SMALL DAILY HABITS

**CHANGE
EVERYTHING**

ECCLESIASTES 1:1-2

The words of the Teacher,
son of David, king in Jerusalem:

**"Meaningless!
Meaningless!"**

says the Teacher.
"Utterly meaningless!
Everything is meaningless."

DAY 1

WHAT
THE
HEVEL?

ECCLESIASTES 1:1-2

DAY 1

Ecclesiastes 1:1-2

The words of the Teacher, son of David, king in Jerusalem: “Meaningless! Meaningless!” says the Teacher. “Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless.”

Well, that’s one way to start the day, right? Everything is meaningless.

Maybe you’ve felt that way before — maybe even today. That nagging question creeps in: *Does any of this really matter?*

But here’s the thing: The Hebrew word translated as “meaningless” is *Hevel*. But it doesn’t mean “pointless.” It literally means vapor or smoke.

Think about smoke for a moment. You see it. You reach for it. But the moment you think you’ve got it in your hands, it slips right through your fingers. That’s what the Teacher is saying about life — it’s elusive, fleeting. Life is here, and then suddenly it’s gone.

That realization can feel depressing, maybe even debilitating. But it can also be freeing. It strips away the clutter and brings into focus what really matters.

It’s been said that *we all live two lives, and the second one begins when we realize we only have one.*

That’s it. I only have one glorious, messy, beautiful, crazy life. Just one. So the real question is: What am I going to do with it?

Yes, it's a pressure-filled question. Maybe even terrifying. But it's also clarifying. Because if life is short, then I need to ask: *Is the life I'm living right now the one I actually want?*

The good news is that God gives us the gift of choice. We don't have to stay stuck. We can change our lives. We can build new habits, form new patterns, create new behaviors. With time, those choices lead us into completely different circumstances.

We can't hold onto the smoke forever, but we can reach for it. We can seize the vapor while it's here.

The dying wish of so many is simply "more time." Just one more day. But here's the hard truth: We already have a day. We have *this* day. What are we doing with it?

When we're young, we beg time to move faster. When we're old, we plead for it to slow down. But either way, time slips through. Yesterday is gone. Last week's smoke has already disappeared. That recital is over. That baseball game is in the books. That meeting will never happen again. That quiet moment to tell someone you love them may have already slipped by. And what's left behind?

REGRET.

But here's the good news. Right now, in this little slice of time, there's power. There's a chance to do it differently. To pause. To look around. To breathe. To live inside what one writer called "day-tight compartments."

Because the only place God meets us is in the now. We can't go back. Tomorrow isn't promised. All we really have is today.

So live it. Seize the smoke. Breathe in the vapor. Don't waste the gift.

LIFE IS
VAPOR

**HERE
TODAY.**

**GONE
TOMORROW.**

MATTHEW 13:31-32

“The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is **smallest of all seeds**, yet when it grows, it becomes the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches.”

DAY 2

SEEDOLOGY

MATTHEW 13:31-32

DAY 2

Matthew 13:31–32

“The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it becomes the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches.”

There’s a thread running through the Bible, a theme that shows up again and again.

Seeds..

It’s not just a spiritual metaphor. It’s how life actually works. Seeds are intensely practical, quietly powerful, and often overlooked. But they are never unimportant.

You could even call it seedology — the study of how growth really happens.

Think about it. The small, hidden, seemingly insignificant choices you make every day are shaping everything about your life:

- ▶ Your marriage
- ▶ Your kids
- ▶ Your career
- ▶ Your money
- ▶ Your health
- ▶ Your habits
- ▶ Even your heart

There is no part of life untouched by the power of seeds.

Genesis 8:22 says it this way:

*As long as the earth endures,
seedtime and harvest,
cold and heat,
summer and winter,
day and night
will never cease.*

This principle is timeless. As long as the earth exists, there will always be sowing and reaping.

Jesus picked up this theme when He told a story in Matthew 13:31–32:
“The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it becomes the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches.”

Here’s the idea:

seeds = right now choices + future potential

**IF YOU WANT A DIFFERENT
HARVEST,

PLANT DIFFERENT SEEDS.**

That's the equation of life.

Paul put it bluntly in Galatians 6:7:

Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.

You and I are sowing something — every single day. With our time. With our thoughts. With our habits. With our words. We are constantly planting.

The problem is that seeds don't feel impressive. We live in a highlight-reel culture. We want the miracle, the breakthrough, the spotlight moment. Nobody cheers for the training montage.

Think about the Rocky movies. The big fight scenes get all the glory, but the transformation happens in the unglamorous grind — running through snow, sweating in a freezing gym, punching slabs of meat. That's the work that produces the win.

The extraordinary is always born out of the ordinary. Miracles grow in the mundane.

I've been testing this in my own life with the 1,000-day project. Just ten small daily habits. Nothing flashy. I'm on Day 268 as I write this. Nobody's giving me a trophy. But I'm changing — day by day, inch by inch.

THAT'S WHAT SEEDS DO.

Let's talk about a few truths about seeds that might reshape how you think about growth.

1. Seeds must be planted in the right soil at the right time.

Jesus said in Matthew 13:8:

"Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop — a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown."

Proverbs 20:4 adds:

Those too lazy to plow in the right season will have no food at the harvest.

There's a window for everything. A season for planting. And when we miss the season, we miss the harvest. Timing matters. Soil matters. The condition of your heart, your relationships, your priorities — **it all matters.**

2. Seeds grow in the dark.

Not in the spotlight. Not in the applause. But underground. Covered. Hidden. Quiet. That's where life begins.

Think about it — Moses spent 40 years in obscurity as a shepherd. Joseph sat forgotten in a prison cell. Paul spent years away from the stage before he became the great missionary. Even Jesus lived three decades in silence before He began His ministry.

God does deep work in the dark. Don't despise the hidden season. That's where roots take hold.

DON'T DESPISE THE HIDDEN SEASON.

3. The speed of the seed is frustrating.

Have you ever watched a time-lapse video of a seed growing? Amazing, right?

Now watch it in real time. Nothing but dirt. Stillness. Silence. Boring. Slow.

Growth takes time. Tomatoes take about 90 days. Lemons ... 3–6 years. Apples ... 10 years. Acorns into oaks ... 50 years.

And yet we live in a microwave culture. We want “Prime-delivered” change by tomorrow.

But Galatians 6:9 reminds us:

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

Keep going. Don’t quit just because it feels slow.

4. Seeds multiply.

One seed doesn’t grow one fruit — it grows many.

Jesus said in John 12:24:

“Unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson once wrote, “The creation of a thousand forests is in one acorn.”

That’s exponential power. That’s legacy.

Have you ever heard of the Svalbard Global Seed Vault? It's tucked away in the permafrost of a Norwegian mountain and holds more than a million seed samples from around the world. If the world falls apart, we have the seeds to start over.

Do you know the number one challenge they face? Keeping the seeds from growing.

Why?

Because that's what seeds are designed to do. And so are you. What we hope for tomorrow begins with the seeds we plant today. If you want a different harvest, you've got to plant different seeds.

Plant the Seed

Maybe this is your turning point. Maybe today is your moment of surrender. Maybe this is the day you finally say, **"Here I am."**

You know the old saying: "The best time to plant a tree was ten years ago." That can feel depressing if you think you've missed your chance. But here's the good news: The second-best time is right now.

What seed do you need to plant today?

- ▶ Start moving — get up and go for a walk.
- ▶ Open your computer and pay that bill.
- ▶ Call your dad.
- ▶ Fill out that application.
- ▶ Pick up your Bible.
- ▶ Sign up for the group.
- ▶ Pour out the liquor bottle.
- ▶ Say, "I'm sorry."

Plant the seed. Then keep planting.

You might not see anything for a while. But sooner or later, little green shoots will break through the dirt. And that's the beginning of a new harvest.

If you don't like the harvest you're seeing right now — the weight, the job, the distance in your marriage, the dryness in your faith — remember this: *The harvest is the result of the seeds you've already planted. Millions of choices, big and small.*

But there is good news.
You can start planting new seeds today.
You can grow a different harvest tomorrow.

Not overnight.
Not instantly.
But eventually.
If you just keep planting.

**THE HARVEST IS THE RESULT OF THE
SEEDS YOU'VE ALREADY PLANTED.**

MILLIONS OF CHOICES, BIG AND SMALL.

**THE
EXTRAORDINARY
IS ALWAYS BORN
OUT OF THE
ORDINARY.**

PSALM 119:105

Your word is a
lamp for my feet,
a light
on my path.

DAY 3

**TAKE
YOUR
NEXT
STEP**

PSALM 119:105

Psalm 119:105

Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.

Have you ever noticed what it's like to drive at night? Your headlights only show you a few feet ahead, yet that's all you need to keep moving forward. You may not see the whole road, but you'll still reach your destination if you just keep going.

That's how following Jesus works.

When He called people to be His disciples, the invitation was simple: Come *follow me*. Come be with me. Come watch. Come listen. Come see another way. He wasn't asking for a giant leap into the unknown, but rather a step. One step at a time. "For as much as you can see," He says, "**follow Me.**"

And the truth is, we can't help but be changed by being close to Him.

But here's the catch — you have to move. You have to respond. Faith isn't passive. It's one step after another. Eyes fixed on Jesus. Stepping where He steps. Moving forward, even if it feels inch by inch.

That's why, for as long as I can remember, I've been encouraging people to take their *next step*.

Not a dozen steps. Not someone else's step. Just the next right one.

And notice that it's *your* next step. Not your mom's. Not your spouse's. Not the super-Christian down the row at church. **Yours.**

If you'll take that step, you'll stay close to Jesus. And the closer you are, the more He'll keep inviting you into better ways of living.

If you'll take that step, you'll stay close to Jesus. And the closer you are, the more He'll keep inviting you into better ways of living.

But here's the thing: Each new step usually costs something. It stretches you. It asks for a little more — more faith, more sacrifice, more courage. But those steps lead somewhere. Somewhere better. Somewhere closer to God.

Have you ever noticed what it's like to drive at night? Your headlights only show you a few feet ahead, yet that's all you need to keep moving forward. You may not see the whole road, but you'll still reach your destination if you just keep going.

So when you find yourself asking, *What now?* the answer is simple. Find Jesus. Follow Him. Just take your next step.

Every next step almost always requires three things: faith, sacrifice, and courage.

Faith means moving into the unknown. Trusting. Surrendering. Often, your next step won't make complete sense. People around you may not understand it. They may even question it. But it's *your* step to take.

Honestly, I don't know if I've ever been more than about 80% sure of any major decision in my life. There's always some uncertainty.

That's where Proverbs 3:5-6 comes in:

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways submit to Him, and He will make your paths straight.

The longer you follow Jesus, the deeper your trust grows in His character, His wisdom, *His direction*.

But if I'm honest? I'm addicted to certainty. I want to know exactly how things will turn out before I move. Yet certainty is an illusion. The only thing truly certain is that Jesus is good, and He will lead me to the right place.

So I don't lean on what I can fully see or perfectly understand. I lean on Him. I submit my ways to Him.

The more I know the **Word of God**, the easier it becomes to recognize the **Will of God**.

Scripture reveals His heart. It shows me what matters most. It gives me wisdom on relationships, money, parenting, marriage, and how to treat people who are different from me. The Bible doesn't just give me suggestions — it shows me examples to follow.

And honestly, there are some things I don't even need to pray about. God has already spoken. Not for my consideration, but for my obedience.

When I submit my ways to Him, He makes my path straight.

That's my part: to trust Him, then to choose. To the best of my understanding — and even beyond it — I choose what I believe He would want me to do. And once I choose, I trust. I release it into His hands instead of second-guessing every moment.

Because here's what I believe: God is good. God is faithful. And God is more than capable of taking my imperfect decisions and smoothing them out into His perfect plan.

**GOD IS GOOD.
GOD IS FAITHFUL.
AND GOD IS
MORE THAN
CAPABLE.**

EXODUS 23:30

Little by little
I will drive
them out
before you,
until you have
increased enough
to take possession
of the land.

DAY 4

**THINK
SMALL**

EXODUS 23:30

DAY 4

Exodus 23:30

Little by little I will drive them out before you, until you have increased enough to take possession of the land.

The people of Israel stood before an enormous challenge. Enemies surrounded them, yet God called them to move forward, to take ground. It must have felt overwhelming. A daunting task.

But in that moment, God reminded them: *little by little*.

Think small.

One battle at a time.

Until they had grown strong enough to take full possession of what He had promised.

I get wanting to GO BIG.

Because I'm an all-or-nothing kind of person.

When I'm on a diet, I'm either counting macros, hitting CrossFit five days a week, or doing some ridiculous "500-burpees-a-day" challenge ... or I'm eating cake in the shower.

When I think about changing, I tend to believe it has to be **BIG** or it doesn't count.

Go big or go home, right?

Well, now I say: **Go small**.

It's the little things no one sees that lead to the big things everyone wants. Small, consistent, healthy choices — over time — create dramatic results.

IT LOOKS LIKE THIS:

- ▶ **Reading a chapter of the Bible every day.**
- ▶ **Tucking your kids in each night and saying a short prayer over them.**
- ▶ **A standing Saturday morning coffee date with your spouse.**
- ▶ **Walking the neighborhood after work instead of scrolling your phone.**
- ▶ **Saying “thank you” more often.**
- ▶ **Doing the dishes without being asked.**
- ▶ **Getting up 15 minutes early to pray or reflect.**
- ▶ **Skipping dessert most nights, not all nights.**
- ▶ **Reading five pages in a book that stretches your mind.**
- ▶ **Taking one class a semester until you finally finish that degree.**
- ▶ **Saving \$10 a day — because that’s how \$10,000 starts.**

You get the point.

The biggest transformations rarely happen overnight. They happen over time, through quiet, unglamorous faithfulness in the small things. So find a few simple habits that pull you toward the life you want.

And start.

Or start again.

Think small.

Because that’s how God does big things.

[illegible]



He replied, “Because you have so little faith. Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.”

Matthew 17:20

GALATIANS 6:9

Let us not become weary
in doing good, for at the
proper time we will reap
a harvest if we do
not give up.

DAY 5

CONSISTENCY COMPOUNDS

GALATIANS 6:9

DAY 5

Galatians 6:9

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

I'm with the turtle. The tortoise. You know the old fable of the tortoise and the hare? On paper, the quick rabbit should win every time. Everyone expects it. But in the end, it's the slow, steady turtle who crosses the finish line first. Why? Because he just kept moving. Step after step. Slow, steady, faithful.

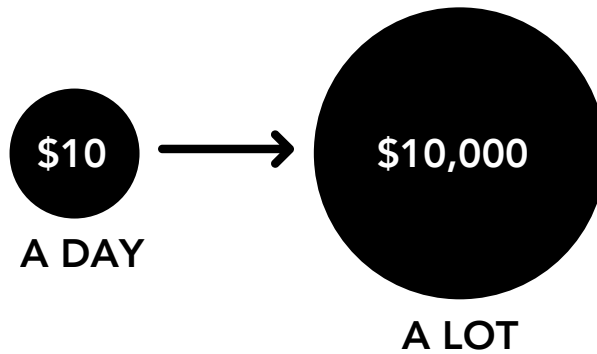
That's me. Or at least what I've been leaning into for a long time.

I figured out early on that I wasn't the smartest, the best looking, or the most athletic, and I wasn't especially gifted in any one thing. But I realized I could be steady. I could keep showing up. I could put in the work today — and then do it again tomorrow. Little by little, getting a bit better each day. By stacking one good day on top of another, before long I could build something solid. That's when I discovered consistency is a kind of superpower.



**& SLOW
& STEADY**

We all know the power of compound interest. Save just a little at a time, and over the years it multiplies — exponentially.



I decided to put that principle into practice during this 1,000-day experiment. I saved just \$10 a day. Ten dollars! That's a trip to Starbucks, something tossed in the Target cart, or a random Amazon extra. Now? That small daily choice has grown into \$10,000. A little became a lot.

It's easy to see the math when it comes to money.

What's harder to see — but just as true — is how the same principle works in life.

**CONSISTENCY COMPOUNDS
EVERYWHERE.**

What I consistently put in my mouth shows up on my body.

What consistently comes out of my mouth shows up in my relationships.

Habits stack. One on top of another. And before long, they shape who you are becoming, your character, your health, your career, your relationships, and especially your spiritual life.

IT LOOKS LIKE THIS:

- ▶ Reading a chapter of the Bible each morning.
- ▶ Bedtime prayers with my kids every night.
- ▶ Walking 10,000 steps most days.
- ▶ Having another unhurried conversation with my child on the way to practice.
- ▶ Serving at church regularly.
- ▶ Writing one more thank-you note to a client.
- ▶ Showing up to work on time.
- ▶ Sending that encouraging text.
- ▶ Extending that invitation to church one more time.
- ▶ Choosing not to pour the second glass of wine tonight.
- ▶ Sponsoring that Compassion child another month.
- ▶ Going to bed at a decent time.

Simple, ordinary choices. **Again and again.**

Over and over. It adds up — to a life.

So today, don't stop. Take one more step.

Just one more.

Just one more time.

In a month, you'll notice the difference.

In a year, others will notice the difference.

In three years, you won't even recognize who you used to be.

The Bible says it best: "At the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up."

So keep going. Your harvest is coming.

MICAH 7:8

Though I have fallen,
I will rise.

Though I sit
in darkness,
**the Lord will be
my light.**

DAY 6

**CRASHES
AND
COMEBACKS**

MICAH 7:8

DAY 6

Micah 7:8

Though I have fallen, I will rise. Though I sit in darkness,
the Lord will be my light.

**I was staring at a rebuild.
Everything had been stripped
down to the studs. There
wasn't much left — maybe a
foundation, maybe a few
good bones.**

This is going to be a lot of work, I thought.

Only it wasn't a house. It was my life.

The way I had been living had wrecked nearly every part of me. I was frayed, unraveling at the seams. I wasn't really living, I was just existing. Surviving one day at a time. The only reason I kept going was because of responsibility. To my wife, my kids, and a church full of people who were counting on me. That was my only motivation to keep moving forward.

**But if I'm being honest, deep down
I wanted to disappear. To vanish into nothingness.**

In my darkest moments, I wanted to exit this life permanently.

Any joy or satisfaction I once felt — in who I was or in what I was doing — had been siphoned off, drop by drop, over the last decade. I was a shell of a man.

How did I get here?

My mind, my body, my relationships, and most certainly my soul were trashed. Thirteen years of church planting, drama, conflict, setbacks, explosive growth, a pandemic, and unhealthy coping habits had left me empty and crashing.

It took a friend — a real friend — to step in and say, “No more. We have to get you help.” He didn’t just talk about it. He made the calls. He drew the line in the sand.

(Thank you, Hodge.)

I thought my life was over. That I might lose my job. Maybe even my marriage. I was sure I’d lose the respect of everyone around me for not being able to hold it all together.

If people knew how broken and fragile I really was, I thought, they’d abandon me.

But I discovered the opposite.

When I got honest — when I finally asked for help — people didn’t run away. They ran **toward me**.

And slowly, I began to stand back up.

I decided there would be no more band-aids this time. No more quick fixes or surface-level solutions. I was going in for surgery.

I found the best counselor I could. I laid my soul bare in raw, no-holds-barred conversations. I flew to another state for three days of intensive therapy. I received brutal feedback. I dug deep to uncover the source of the pain. I wanted to expose the false fears and toxic motivations that had driven me into such unhealthy places.

I took a crowbar to locked doors. I stared into the darkest, scariest holes in my heart. And you know what?

**NO MORE.
WE HAVE
TO GET
YOU HELP.**

I found Jesus there.

He's always in the messy places.
He shows up when we least expect it.

And He is kind. Clear. Honest. But mostly He is so kind.
He's still saving. Still rescuing. Still bringing people back to life.

Jesus says, *Follow me back from the brink.*

I truly thought my life was over. And in some ways, it was. The old life — the exhausting, broken way I had been living — was over, replaced by a new one.

And that's exactly what Jesus does. He makes exchanges.
Bring me your life, He says, and I'll give you something better.

Beauty for ashes.
Strength for fear.

A garment of praise for a spirit of despair. You know how people say, "I wouldn't wish this on my worst enemy"?

Well — I would. I would wish this season on everyone.
Because in the brokenness, the mess, the shame, the darkness, the confusion — that's where Jesus does His best work. It's where real transformation happens.

You can come back.
It's not too late.
You are not too far gone.

PSALM 32:8

I will **instruct** you and
teach you in the way you
should go;
I will **counsel** you with
my loving
eye on **you**.

DAY 7

JIU JITSU
AND
JESUS

PSALM 32:8

Psalm 32:8

I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go.

I walked in feeling nervous.

I had never done this before. I'd thought about it plenty of times, but it always felt intimidating, and definitely out of my comfort zone. This wasn't the kind of thing anyone expected me to try.

Fighting strangers.

Or, more accurately, grappling with strangers in a controlled environment ... while wearing karate pajamas.

My friend Tim had been on me for months to give it a shot. "You'll love it," he kept saying.

So I finally picked a date. I talked myself out of it five times on the drive over, and back into it six. But somehow, I ended up in the parking lot of Easton Brazilian Jiu Jitsu, home to the fastest-growing martial art in the world. The one made famous by the first UFC champion, Royce Gracie.

Tim met me there. I borrowed a uniform — called a gi — and got dressed. I looked ridiculous. I had no idea how to tie the belt, and the whole thing felt like a bad Halloween costume.

Class started.

The instructor, who everyone calls “Professor,” led us through a warm-up that felt a little disconnected, sort of like a Mr. Miyagi scene out of *The Karate Kid*.

Then he showed us a move. A choke.

We picked partners and were supposed to practice on them. Imagine the scene:

“Hey, nice to meet you. My name’s Scotty. Mind if I try choking you until you almost pass out?”

The safety rule was simple: If you feel like you can’t breathe, tap your partner and they’ll stop.

Comforting, right?

A little later, it got real. We went “live.” That meant moving fast and hard — trying to escape, reverse the position, get on top, and make the other person tap out.

I was paired with a smaller guy who had clearly been training a lot longer than me. He tied me in knots. Rolled me up like a pretzel. It was embarrassing. How is this little dude doing this to me? I’m bigger. I’m stronger. This makes no sense.

I'm *bigger*.

I'm *stronger*.

This *makes no sense*.

And yet I loved it. I was hooked.

The very next day, I came back. I signed up and bought my own gi. And I haven't stopped since. It's been over a year now.

Every class humbles me. But every class teaches me something new.

There's something powerful about stepping into an uncomfortable situation. About embracing what's called a "white belt mentality" — starting from zero, admitting you know nothing, opening yourself up to instruction, and trusting the process.

And here's the surprising part: I've learned more about Jesus — and about how spiritual growth really works — from Jiu Jitsu than from just about anything else lately.

Here are a few takeaways:

First, there's a coach.

The Jiu Jitsu instructor is called Professor, and he is my guide. I trust him. Most days, I have no idea why he's teaching me what he's teaching me, or how I'll use it later. But I listen. I follow.

When I mess up, he corrects me. Not because he's mad, but because he wants me to get better. He knows where I'm headed. And when I finally get it right, he's the first one to cheer me on.

Second, you have to show up.

That's half the battle. Wake up early. Drive to the gym. Step onto the mat. Put yourself in the environment, and growth will happen.

If I consistently show up and do the work, progress is inevitable.

Third, you can't learn it from YouTube or from a book.

You have to *do* it.

The same is true with our walk with Jesus. Sermons can inspire. Podcasts can guide.

Books can teach. But the real difference is in the doing.

You have to work it out. You can't just know about it — you have to live it. And you can't do it alone. You need people around you to practice with, learn from, and lean on.

Finally, it's humbling.

Just when you think you've got it figured out, you get humbled. You realize you don't know nearly as much as you thought. And that's good. It keeps you open. Teachable.

Because here's the truth: You can learn from anyone.

Spiritual growth works the same way. It's challenging. It often means submitting ourselves to Jesus and letting Him lead us into uncomfortable situations.

Most days, it feels like we have no idea what we're doing — or why He's asking us to do this or that. But we keep trusting the Instructor.

AND WE KEEP SHOWING UP.

- ▶ Reading Scripture.
- ▶ Praying.
- ▶ Going to church.
- ▶ Serving in some way.
- ▶ Participating in a small group, even when we're tired.
- ▶ Inviting that friend to church one more time.
- ▶ Choosing to forgive — or choosing to hold back the words we'd love to let fly.

Over and over.

And then one day, almost without noticing it, something shifts. We realize we're changing. Our desires are different. Our reactions aren't what they used to be. We're seeing life from a new angle.

Why? Because the difference is in the doing. In the practice.

You don't learn to swim by watching someone else stroke through the water. You don't learn to ride a bike by reading a manual. You try. You get wet. You wobble. You fall.

You get back up.

That's how growth works.

And you're not alone. Everyone is on this journey. We practice together. We fall together. We get up together.

You cannot live the transforming life of Jesus by yourself.

So keep going. Step into the uncomfortable. Surround yourself with people who are trying to follow Jesus too.

Even when it humbles you.
Even when it feels like you have so far to go.

Show up again.

YOU CANNOT LIVE THE TRANSFORMING LIFE OF JESUS **BY YOURSELF.**

Because before long, you'll look up and realize you're the one helping the next nervous, eager, terrified person walking through the door.

PSALM 63:1

My soul thirsts
for you,
my whole
being longs
for you.

DAY 8

SOUL

PSALM 63:1

DAY 8

Psalm 63:1

My soul thirsts for you, my whole being longs for you.

If you and I are going to change — really change, from the inside out — we have to take spiritual steps.

We have to work on our souls.

As much as I wish soul transformation were instant, some miraculous moment that fixes everything, I've learned it doesn't usually happen that way. It's a process. Slow. Steady. Incremental.

Because growing in our souls is like growing in any other relationship — with God. And every relationship takes time, intention, and shared experiences.

So let's start (or restart) with two simple habits, two foundational practices:

Reading Scripture and prayer.

Because growing in our souls is like growing in any other relationship — with God. And every relationship takes time, intention, and shared experiences.

READING SCRIPTURE

Let's be honest. The Bible can feel intimidating.
It's big. It's ancient.
You might even wonder, *Where do I start?*

Maybe you've tried before, but it felt confusing or overwhelming.
If that's you, don't worry. You're not alone.

Here's something that helps: The Bible isn't just one book — it's a **library** of 66 books, written by around 40 authors over about 1,500 years. Peasants and kings. Prophets, soldiers, poets, and shepherds.

And somehow, all of them are telling one story:

THE STORY OF GOD.

Who He is, what He's doing in the world, and how we fit into that story.

So here's what I suggest:

Find a Bible — paper or digital, whatever works for you.
Choose a translation that's easy to understand.
(Since the Bible was originally written in Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic, we're reading great English translations. I recommend the **NIV** — New International Version — or the **NLT** — New Living Translation.)
Once you have your Bible, open to the Gospel of Mark.

It's short — just 16 chapters — and it tells the story of Jesus' life and ministry in a fast-moving, easy-to-follow way.

HERE'S YOUR PLAN:

- 1 Read one chapter a day for the next 16 days.**
- 2 Pick a time that works best for you. (I like mornings before work.)**
- 3 Pick a place you can return to each day. (A consistent spot helps.)**
- 4 Before you start, say a simple prayer: *God, speak to me through Your Word.***

Because here's the amazing thing: The Bible is the only book where the Author is always present when you read it.

As you read, ask yourself three simple questions:

- What's happening here?
- What's the lesson? (What is God trying to say?)
- What should I do about it? (How can I apply this today?)

In just two weeks, you'll have read the entire story of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection — the heartbeat of the Bible. Everything else points to or flows from this story.

After that, keep going.

Maybe try a book from the Old Testament next, like **Proverbs**. It's super practical. Thirty-one short chapters full of wisdom for everyday life. You can read one a day for a month.

PRAYER

Prayer is simply a **conversation with God**.
That's it.

But I forget that sometimes.
I start overthinking it — trying to sound spiritual or use words I'd never say in a normal conversation.

God doesn't need fancy language. ***He just wants you.***

So the real question is:
How can I carve out a little space each day to simply talk with Him?

For me, right after I read the Bible, I do two simple things.

1 I Pray the Lord's Prayer

It helps me center my heart and gives me a track to run on.
I go slowly through each phrase, thinking about what it means for *today*.

*Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one.*

—Matthew 6:9–13

Each line is a doorway to reflection — about trust, forgiveness, provision, and dependence on God.

2 I Pull Out My Prayer List

I'm easily distracted, so a list helps keep me focused.
It's just a running list of people and things I'm praying for.

Some things I pray for every single day, like my family.
My wife, my kids, my grandkids.
I pray for them specifically: their heart for God, their friendships, their future, their struggles.

Then I rotate through other people or topics throughout the week.

You could try something like this:

- ▶ **Monday:** Your church or small group
- ▶ **Tuesday:** Close friends
- ▶ **Wednesday:** Big dreams for the future
- ▶ **Thursday:** Coworkers or teammates
- ▶ **Friday:** People in need or going through hard times

It's not about perfection — it's about rhythm. A steady, daily conversation with God.

Ask Him to bless people.
Ask for wisdom.
Ask for clarity.
And don't forget to listen.

You can start practicing these two small habits today.

Simple. Practical. Transformative.

They don't require hours, just consistency. Fifteen minutes a day can begin to reshape your inner world. Just begin — or begin again.

These timeless practices will anchor your soul, deepen your faith, and help you grow into the person God created you to be.

IT'S NOT ABOUT
PERFECTION —
IT'S ABOUT
RHYTHM.

A steady, daily conversation with God.

ROMANS 12:2

Do not conform to the pattern
of this world, but be
transformed by the
renewing of your mind.

Then you will be able to test
and approve what God's will
is — his good, pleasing and
perfect will.

DAY 9

MIND

ROMANS 12:2

Romans 12:2

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is — his good, pleasing and perfect will.

I love to read. Always have.

One of my earliest memories is going to the library with my mom and having my mind completely blown by the idea that I could actually take the books home. Not just read them there — *borrow them*. For free.

I walked out that day with a stack of books in my arms, barely able to see over the top of them.

Fast forward to today, when Amazon dropped off two new books on my front porch. That happens most weeks.

When I look at who I am today, Jesus, my wife Amy, a handful of key mentors, and **books** are almost entirely responsible for the person I've become.

There are dozens of important family relationships and friendships that have shaped me. But it was often what I encountered in the pages of books that expanded my world — introducing new ideas, uncovering dreams I didn't know I had, and giving me roadmaps for places I wanted to go.

That's because *what* we think — and *how* we think — sets our lids and limits.

What we think — and *how* we think — sets our lids and limits.

Scripture speaks directly to this. In Romans 12, Paul urges believers to be “transformed by the renewing of your mind.” In other words, real change doesn’t start with behavior modification. It starts with thought transformation.

New patterns. New frameworks. New ways of seeing God, ourselves, and the world.

When Jesus was asked what the greatest commandment was, He quoted the Shema: *“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, **and mind.**”*

Yet some people assume that to be a person of faith — to follow Jesus — you have to check your brain at the door. That faith and thinking are somehow opposites. That curiosity is dangerous. That learning is optional.

I’ve found the exact opposite to be true.

Following Jesus has expanded my thinking, not shrunk it. Faith hasn’t dulled my curiosity — it’s sharpened it.

So here’s the challenge.

What’s one area of your life you’d genuinely like to improve?

Change?

Grow?

Get better?

Maybe it’s becoming a better spouse.

Or improving your marketing skills.

Or learning how to parent more intentionally.

Or getting control of your personal finances.

NOW HERE'S THE SIMPLE — BUT **POWERFUL** — NEXT STEP:

Find a resource about it.

Start with a book.

Google “best books on ____.”

Ask a friend whose life you respect for a recommendation.

Walk into a library and ask a librarian for help. (*Yes, libraries still exist. And yes, you can borrow books for free. Wild, I know.*)

If reading isn't your primary learning style, don't stop there.

Listen to a podcast on your commute.

Take an online course.

Watch thoughtful YouTube content from credible voices.

Learn through audiobooks while you walk, drive, or work out.

The format matters far less than the habit.

Commit to just 5–10 pages a day. Or 10–15 minutes of listening. That's it.

No pressure.

No marathon sessions.

You'll be surprised what happens over time.

At that pace, you'll finish 10–12 books a year or the equivalent in audio or courses. That alone would put you in the top percentage of intentional learners.

Readers aren't always leaders.

But *leaders* are always *learners*.

SO HERE'S THE CHALLENGE.



What's one area of your life you'd genuinely like to improve?



Change?



Grow?



Get better?

1 CORINTHIANS 6:19–20

Do you not know that your
**bodies are temples of
the Holy Spirit,**
who is in you, whom
you have received from God?
You are not your own; you
were bought at a price.
Therefore honor God
with your bodies.

DAY 10

BODY

1 CORINTHIANS 6:19–20

1 Corinthians 6:19–20

Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.

**I have a body.
So do you.
And we only get one.**

You might like yours — or maybe you don't.

Honestly, there are plenty of days I don't like mine. I remember being a skinny kid in high school and thinking, I hate this.

One moment stands out.

Coach Tyre is standing over me while I'm lying on the bench press, about to try my first-ever max. His breath isn't exactly fresh, and he's yelling, "UP!!!" I'm pushing with everything I've got. Veins bulging. Face red. Definitely not breathing. After what feels like thirty eternal seconds, I finally lock it out. I rack the weight. It's the most I've ever done.

Coach slaps me on the shoulder and grins,

"Way to go, Priest!"

And just like that, I'm hooked.

I'd only been lifting with the team for a few weeks.

At first, I could barely lift the bar. But I kept showing up, doing what they told me to do:

- ▶ **Do this movement.**
- ▶ **Use this much weight.**
- ▶ **Do this many reps.**
- ▶ **On these days of the week.**

The first time, I was so sore I could barely move the next day. But weirdly, I liked it.

A few weeks later, I was lifting more weight, feeling stronger, and catching myself flexing in the bathroom mirror like every hormone-fueled teenage boy.

***What amazed me was the simplicity of it all.
If I just did the work — consistently, with a little
coaching — my body changed.***

And it made a difference.
In how I felt.
In how I played.
In how I showed up in the world.

How we show up in life has a lot to do with how we feel in our bodies
— and how we feel about our bodies.

The Bible says our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit.
That means God has chosen to live **with us — in us.**

Sometimes in church circles we talk as if the body doesn't matter.
Like it's less spiritual.

As if the soul is the only thing God cares about.

| But that's *not true.*

You can't separate soul and body, at least not here on earth.

Taking care of my body affects my soul.

I've heard countless sermons about what we feed our minds, but hardly any about what we feed our bodies.

And yet I've learned that what I eat, how I move, and how I rest all shape how I think, feel, and respond to life.

Here's what I know:

I can accomplish more of what God's called me to do — and do it longer — when I'm healthy.

I'm a steward of this temple.

It's my responsibility.

For what I put in my mouth.

For how I move.

For what I avoid — and what I adopt.

WHEN I STARTED MY 1,000-DAY JOURNEY,

**I decided to add a few
simple health habits:**



NO SWEETS



NO BREAD



MOVE EVERY DAY



TAKE SOME SUPPLEMENTS



EVERY DAY

Making the decision *ahead of time* made the decision in *the moment* easier.

It became simpler to say no to dessert. Half the menu was already off-limits. I didn't have to think. I just followed the plan.

Some days, "**moving my body**" meant CrossFit or Jiu Jitsu. Other days, it was a walk or a few push-ups in a hotel room.

Once, I looked ridiculous doing lunges in an airport terminal.
Who cares? I'll never see those people again.

But here's what I've noticed:

When I eat better, sleep enough, and move regularly — it changes me.

I have more energy to do what God's called me to do.

I think more clearly.

I'm more patient.

I'm kinder.

I'm just ... better.

And I bet you know that's true for you, too.

So if your body is connected to your soul ...

If your body really is the temple of the Holy Spirit ...

If you want to live stronger and longer — for your family, your calling, your purpose ...

What changes do you need to make to be healthier?

What's one small thing you could change over the next 30 days?

JOSHUA 24:15

As for me
and my household,
we will
serve the Lord.

DAY 11

FAMILY

JOSHUA 24:15

Joshua 24:15

As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.

For as long as I can remember, I've wanted to be a good husband and dad.

Amy and I got married young. At 22 and 21, we thought we had it all figured out, like most young couples do. In reality, we were just kids trying to act like adults. Thankfully, we both came from loving families that modeled consistency and faithfulness. But even with that foundation, we had to find our own way. We all do.

Early on, we made a decision. We wanted to be intentional about our marriage and family. We started paying attention to couples who seemed to have what we wanted — strong marriages, connected kids, and a sense of peace in their homes. Then we'd invite them to dinner and ask a million questions.

What time do your kids go to bed?
How do you handle it when he works too much?
Do you do devotions as a family?
How do you navigate in-laws?
Where do you vacation?
What's your take on debt? Buying a house?
Do you pray before bed?
What about sex? Money? Date nights?

To be honest, I was usually the one asking all the questions — especially the awkward ones. Amy definitely wanted to hear the answers, but she was perfectly happy letting me be the one to bring up the “sensitive” topics ... like sex.

And here’s the truth:

| WE JUST STARTED DOING WHAT | THOSE COUPLES TOLD US.

Weekly date night? **Check.**

Pray with your kids before bed? **Check.**

Weekend getaways without the kids? **Check.**

Dinner together at the table at least four nights a week? **Check.**

To be fair, we mostly ate at home because we were broke. But we had read that kids who eat dinner with their family four or more nights a week are statistically less likely to do drugs.

Win-win.

And honestly, we’re still doing it. Just the other day, we asked another couple how they stay close with their adult kids.

They told us they take a family vacation every year — with their grown kids and grandkids. We went home, put it on the calendar, and started saving for it that same month.

Today, we really do love each other, and maybe even more importantly, we really like each other. We laugh a lot. We enjoy being together. There’s a lightness to our relationship that’s been built one small choice at a time.

But that didn't just happen.

IT'S TAKEN

EFFORT:

**YEARS OF SMALL,
DELIBERATE CHOICES
STACKED ON
TOP OF EACH OTHER.**

Our kids seem to like us too, at least for now. We spend a lot of time together. I talk to my daughter every day. She talks to her mom about nine times a day.

Our son and daughter-in-law, along with our precious granddaughters, live nearby. We see them several times a week. We're together for every special moment and holiday.

But that didn't just *happen*. It's taken effort: years of small, deliberate choices stacked on top of each other.

For over 25 years, Amy and I have gone on a weekly date, just the two of us. Most of the time it's nothing glamorous: Costco runs, errands, hitting the gym, grabbing a quick meal somewhere cheap. Sometimes we share a plate. Sometimes our "date" is just walking the aisles at Costco and eating samples.

But those thousands of small, shared moments? They've added up to something beautiful.

Amy is my best friend. I love her far more now than I did when we were those wide-eyed 20-somethings standing at the altar.

**BUT THOSE THOUSANDS OF SMALL,
SHARED MOMENTS? THEY'VE
ADDED UP TO SOMETHING
BEAUTIFUL.**

And again, none of this just happens. A strong family is built through small, intentional choices. Little routines. Simple commitments repeated over and over until they become the rhythm of your life.

What's one new habit you could start in your family?

- ▶ **A weekly game night**
- ▶ **Booking a babysitter for a date night with your spouse**
- ▶ **Pizza and ice cream Thursdays**
- ▶ **A daddy-daughter day**
- ▶ **Praying with your kid after story time**
- ▶ **Planning a trip with your spouse — just the two of you**

Strong families aren't built in grand gestures. They're built in the everyday moments — the ones that don't seem to matter much at the time but somehow add up to everything that does.

Keep going. It's worth it.

List some new habits you could start in your family:

PROVERBS 17:17

A friend loves at
all times, and a
brother is born
for a time of adversity.

DAY 12

FRIENDS

PROVERBS 17:17
PROVERBS 27:17

DAY 12

Proverbs 17:17

A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for a time of adversity.

Proverbs 27:17

As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.

I'm an introvert.

A lot of people think that means I don't like people, but that's not true.

I just don't like "you."

Kidding! (Mostly.)

What being an introvert actually means is that I recharge when I'm alone. Silence fuels me. Solitude doesn't scare me. I'm comfortable in my own head, and I always have been.

But if I'm not careful, solitude slowly turns into isolation. Recharge turns into retreat. And when we get isolated ... we get weird.

When we're alone too long, we lose our counter-voices — the people who help us process reality. The ones who explain things we're misinterpreting, encourage us when we're spiraling, or lovingly call us out when we're off.

God made us for community.
We cannot live the way of Jesus alone.
We need friends.

The problem is, making friends as an adult is just ... awkward.

It feels like a second-grade conversation.

"I like ninjas.

Do you like ninjas?

Okay cool. Let's be friends."

It's not quite like that anymore.

It's more subtle.

More like, "I like trucks."

Or "You golf?"

Or "Our kids are on the same team."

Or "Our wives seem to get along."

"So ... Do you want to be friends?"

Awkward, right?

They say we live in the loneliest generation in history. Constantly connected, yet deeply alone. And it's especially true for men.

Plenty of acquaintances.

Plenty of group texts.

Very few people to actually call.

No one to text when life gets heavy.

No one to sit across from and talk things through.

No one to lean on — or celebrate a big win with.

Don't settle for that.

Here's part of the problem — for me, at least. I often expect friendship to just happen. Like it's supposed to magically appear fully formed: deep, easy, fun, and solid.

That's the movies.

That's Netflix.

That's not real life.

Real friendship takes work.

It's cultivated, not discovered.

It's built slowly, not binge-watched.

Friendship is intentional.

It's putting a reminder in your phone to text Brad on Mondays — not because it's convenient, but because it matters.

It's scheduling a once-a-month lunch with Carrie and protecting that time because it counts.

It's reminding your guys — again — that the fly-fishing trip in August is still happening, and then sending the hotel details.

It's showing up to your small group on Tuesday night even when you're exhausted and skipping would be easier.

Friendship is made of small choices. Day by day.

Ordinary moments that stack up long before you ever *need* them.

It's sending the funny reel or meme you know they've probably already seen — because you thought of them.

It's telling your longtime high school friend that you think she got a boob job. (*Love tells the truth. Sometimes awkwardly.*)

BUT FRIENDSHIP IS ALSO "BREAK GLASS IN CASE OF EMERGENCY."

It's the friend you call at 2:00 a.m. when everything falls apart.

It's the person who will sit with you in the deepest grief you've ever known — and say absolutely nothing.

It's the one who will fight someone in a parking lot for you.

That kind of friendship doesn't happen by accident.

It's forged in the small stuff.

**That kind of friendship
doesn't happen by
accident.**

It's forged in the small stuff.

SHARPIE ON THE FACE

HAS THIS EVER HAPPENED TO YOU?

You're locked in on a task at school or work, chewing on a pen, clicking it, absentmindedly messing with it. You don't realize it, but you've marked your face. A little black smudge on your cheek, your lip, your nose.

It's noticeable to others, but you can't see it.

You go through your whole day talking to teachers and coworkers, sitting through meetings and lunch. You carry on an entire conversation. Lead an entire meeting.

Then you finally hit the bathroom mirror. And there it is.

Plain as day. A ridiculous Sharpie mark on your face.

Suddenly you replay every interaction.

Why didn't anyone say anything? Just tell me. Save me.

You feel embarrassed. And then ... kind of angry.

Real friends are the people in our lives who will say,

"Hey, you've got Sharpie on your face. You need to deal with that."

People who will speak up about the thing we can't see — or the thing we're pretending not to see. People who love us enough to tell the truth. People who speak the *truth* in love.

Those kinds of friendships don't magically appear in a crisis.

They're built long before it — through intentional, ordinary, faithful presence.

So the question isn't just:

Do you have those kinds of friends?

It's also:

Are you becoming that kind of friend?

PROVERBS 3:9

Honor the Lord
with your **wealth**
and with the
firstfruits of all
your produce.

DAY 13

MONEY

PROVERBS 3:9

PROVERBS 13:11

PHILIPPIANS 4:19

DAY 13

Proverbs 3:9

Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops;

Proverbs 13:11

Dishonest money dwindles away, but whoever gathers money little by little makes it grow.

Philippians 4:19

And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.

| MONEY SOUNDTRACKS

We all grow up with soundtracks about money — scripts we didn't choose but learned over time. Ideas, warnings, and assumptions that quietly follow us into adulthood.

I've spent a good portion of my life worried about money.

Maybe you have too.

There never seems to be enough.

Enough to feel secure.

Enough to relax.

I grew up in a middle-class home, and I honestly don't remember a time when we didn't have what we needed. There was food on the table, clothes in the closet, school supplies, sports, activities. We even went on vacation most years.

My parents both worked. They worked hard. My dad had two jobs — he was a teacher and had a side gig as a repairman. They were incredibly frugal. They never lived beyond their means.

They gave their kids more than they could have imagined when they were growing up.

And yet I carried a lot of unspoken ideas about money with me.

IDEAS LIKE:

Money is scarce and hard to get.

It can all disappear at any moment.

Save as much as you can.

Be careful how you spend.

Stay away from debt.

Don't splurge.

Be responsible.

Honestly, those ideas have served me and my family well. They've helped us make wise decisions and avoid a lot of unnecessary stress.

But they also come with a cost.

Sometimes they leave me with a constant, low-grade hum of anxiety — an ever-present worry about having enough. Enough for today. Enough for tomorrow. Enough if something goes wrong.

What about you?

What money soundtracks are playing in your head?

When I first became a follower of Jesus, I was introduced to a completely different way of thinking about money.

I learned that we are stewards. Everything we have comes from God. It doesn't actually belong to us. He has entrusted resources to us, and one day we'll have to account for how we used what He placed in our hands.

GIVE.

SAVE.

LIVE.

That perspective changed everything.

Give. Save. Live.

What if we oriented our lives around that simple framework?

When I got my first real job, I decided to give away 10% of my income. Or, more accurately, to return it. I believe the tithe — the first 10% — belongs to God. From that first paycheck until now, I've given it every time.

It's discipline.

It's challenging — every single time.

But it's automatic.

I give it to my local church. I entrust it to God for His work in the world — to spread the Gospel, care for people, and build His kingdom. It's an act of faith because I always know exactly where that money could go. I know what it could fix, fund, or upgrade.

The faith comes in when I remind myself that God is my provider. He is the one ultimately responsible for taking care of me and my family. I truly believe He can do that on the 90% that remains.

Giving forces me to trust day by day, paycheck by paycheck.

Even in seasons of financial uncertainty, we've continued to give. Not because it was easy, but because trust grows when it's practiced. And over the years, I've seen so many moments of unexplainable, just-in-time provision — the kind you don't forget.

Then there's saving.

Saving is choosing tomorrow on purpose.

Choose a percentage. It doesn't matter how much you make. Decide whether to give 1%, 5%, even 20%. Then automate it. Have it deducted from your paycheck and invested before you ever see it.

| Saving is choosing tomorrow on purpose.

The power of **compound interest** is astounding. Small, consistent choices made over time quietly become transformational.

If you save \$10 a day, it amounts to \$3,650 a year.

Over 30 years, without earning a single dollar of interest, you would save:

\$109,500

That's already meaningful. That's discipline. That's some financial breathing room.

But now let's add compound interest.

If that same \$10 a day were invested and earned an average of 8% annually, after 30 years, you wouldn't have \$109,500.

You'd have about \$413,000.

Same money.

Same daily habit.

Same \$10 choice.

The difference isn't effort — it's time.

Now here's where it gets even more interesting.

If you waited just five years to start — same amount, same return — but only invested for 25 years, you'd end up with about \$267,000.

That five-year delay costs you nearly \$150,000.

Not because you saved less, but because you gave compound interest less time to work.

For my 1,000-day journey, I decided to save \$10 a day. You could do \$5. You could do \$1. The amount matters less than the habit.

By the end of the challenge, I had saved \$10,000 — money with a purpose. Money I could enjoy, give away, or invest.

And almost every day, I find myself looking for that \$10. Skipping this. Not ordering that. Choosing the cheaper option. Making coffee at home. Eating in. Deleting something from my Amazon cart that I don't actually need.

And here's the surprising part: I don't really miss it.

I have my eyes on a prize.

I imagine what that money could become. A big celebration with friends. A car for a mom in our church who desperately needs one. Or someday, my daughter's wedding. She's not even dating anyone yet, but I already know this will be just enough for flowers, or a down payment, or something we definitely don't need but her mom will insist we do and happily spend it anyway.

These are small choices. Daily choices. Quiet decisions no one applauds. But they build strength for the seasons when we'll really need it. Intentional budgeting, generous living, and trusting God's provision — day by day — create a kind of financial resilience that doesn't happen overnight. It's formed slowly, faithfully, over time. And that's where peace begins to grow.

JOHN 13:3-5

Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

DAY 14

SERVICE

JOHN 13:3-5

John 13:3-5

Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

WE ARE NEVER MORE LIKE JESUS THAN WHEN WE SERVE.

On the night he was arrested, Jesus gathered with his closest friends to celebrate Passover in an upstairs room. The meal was prepared. They sat down to remember and reflect through a thousand-year-old tradition — rehearsing the story of a God who hears the cries of his people and sets captives free.

In those final moments, Jesus began to teach. The disciples didn't realize it, but this would be their last night together before the cross. Three years of teaching, mentoring, and shaping them was coming to a close. These were the final lessons — the ones that mattered most.

But something was missing.

When they arrived, no one had washed their feet.

No servant.

No water.

No basin.

UNTIL JESUS STOOD UP.

He wrapped a towel
around his waist and
picked up the job.

Washing feet was the lowest servant's responsibility — dirty, demeaning, smelly work. And yet Jesus, the one with all authority, the one they called Lord and Master, got down on His knees and began to wash their feet.

If anyone deserved to be served, it was Him.
But because of who He is, He chose to serve.

Why?

To remind them — and us — that leadership is serving.
That greatness looks like humility.
That we are called to be *people of the towel*.

When others step back, we step in.
We serve.

No task is beneath us. It is a privilege to put the needs of others ahead of our own, to recognize the value in people no matter who they are or what they can offer us.

When the world chases power, position, and recognition, we kneel and serve.

And in that quiet, ordinary act of humility, we influence.

If I'm honest, though, I forget this all the time. I'm like a grocery cart with a bad wheel, constantly being pulled off course.

I feel entitled. I think I deserve more. I get selfish and want life to orbit around me.

That's why I have to keep placing myself in environments and rhythms that pull me back toward serving. I have to choose — every day — to set aside what I want in the moment. Sometimes that choice is spontaneous. Other times, it has to be intentional.

Here's the question I keep coming back to:

Am I willing to be inconvenienced?

One day, after being interrupted and feeling completely agitated, I felt convicted. Ashamed, even. Because beneath my frustration was a belief I didn't want to admit — I thought I was too important for someone to get in the way of my plans.

So I started paying closer attention to the Gospels, and I was stunned by what I found. Roughly 90% of Jesus' teaching and miracles happened as the result of an interruption.

I usually see interruptions as obstacles, things that keep me from "real life." But for Jesus, interruptions were real life.

Every interruption was an opportunity: to love, to teach, to heal, to serve. That's the point.

So today, am I willing to be interrupted?

Am I willing to serve on purpose — or even schedule it?

With my spouse.

With my kids.

With my neighbors.

With my church.

Because sometimes following Jesus has to be that practical. Sometimes it has to go on the calendar. *This is when I show up. This is when I serve.*

I do the dishes after dinner.

I bathe the kids and put them to bed on these nights.

I help park cars at church, hold a baby, or clean the bathrooms.

I volunteer the first Saturday of every month at the women's crisis center.

I mow the single mom's lawn every Sunday through the summer.

We babysit for the young couple down the street every other Thursday because they don't have family nearby and are just starting out with nothing.

None of these moments are glamorous. But they matter.

Because serving, day by day, shapes who we are. Small sacrifices form our character.

Ordinary acts of love lighten someone else's burden. And over time, those quiet moments begin to point people toward Jesus.

That's what it looks like to follow him — to choose serving when it's inconvenient, to let interruptions become opportunities, and to pick up the towel.

Because in the end, we don't just serve like Jesus.

We serve Jesus by serving people.

HEBREWS 12:1-2

Let us run with

perseverance

the race marked
out for us.

DAY 15

**DECADES,
NOT DAYS**

HEBREWS 12:1-2

Hebrews 12:1-2

Let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.

**I'M AN IMPATIENT PERSON.
I WANT THINGS FAST.
LIKE, NOW WOULD BE GREAT.**

Maybe you can relate?

Waiting is hard. I'd much rather skip to the good part. But over the years, I've started to notice something: The best things in life don't happen quickly.

Want a child? You wait nine months, and that's just to meet them. The real parenting marathon is only just beginning.

Want to grow a garden? You plant in spring and harvest in fall.
Want to build a house? Get ready for months of planning, permits, and foundation work before anything remotely Pinterest-worthy even happens.

If we really want to see something beautiful grow — if we want to build a life that matters, the kind of life God dreams for us — then we've got to stop thinking in days and start thinking in *decades*.

I wish God was in more of a hurry. I do.

But He seems to love the long road. He's patient. He works in seasons, in rhythms, in timelines that stretch us and shape us.

I've learned I tend to *overestimate* what can happen in a year ... and *wildly underestimate* what can happen in ten.

Ten years ago, our house was full of ponytails, missing lunch boxes, and middle school meltdowns. There were school buses, science fairs, and more orthodontist appointments than I care to remember.

Now? Our youngest just graduated from college. Our oldest is married with two kids. Braces to big-girl jobs to grandbabies.

Ten years. Just ten. And everything changed.

So here's a thought: Live today like you're building toward something ten years from now.

Because you are. Whether you realize it or not, you're always planting seeds.

You want to be in love with your spouse ten years from now? Hold their hand today. Go for a walk. Laugh about something dumb.

You want to be close with your adult kids one day? Put your phone down. Play the game. Throw the ball. Listen when they talk — even if it's about Minecraft or prom drama or something you don't fully get.

You want to be less stressed financially? Ask about that 401(k) match. Skip the shiny thing you don't need.

Save \$10 today? No big deal. Just ten bucks, right?

Do that every day for ten years, and you have \$36,500. With a little interest? Over \$50,000.

That's how it works. Not just with money, *but with everything.*

Relationships. Health. Spiritual growth. Habits. Parenting. Legacy.

It's not always linear. It's definitely not guaranteed. But slow, steady, deliberate steps almost always take you farther than any shortcut ever could.

And look — I know the world we live in doesn't exactly help. We're constantly being sold quick fixes and six-week miracles.

The latest weight-loss drug. The next crypto jackpot. The hot new sermon series that promises instant transformation.

We are promised fast. Faster than fast.

"Why waste time," they say, "when you can have it all right now?"

And when it doesn't happen fast, we start to panic.

We assume something must be broken — maybe we are broken.

"This isn't working."

"I must be behind."

"Everyone else is further along than me."

We scroll through social media, and it feels like everyone else has it all together — the job, the house, the baby, the success.

And us?

We're just trying to figure out what to cook for dinner.

So we hit the skip button on life. Like we're watching a show and just want to get to the next big scene.

But you know what? All the best stuff is in the middle.

The slow, often boring, character-building parts. The moments no one else sees. That's the good stuff. That's the story.

So maybe today — right now — is worth sticking with.

Maybe you're not stuck. You're just in process.

And maybe the life you really want — the one God is shaping in you — won't arrive in days.

But in decades?

You'll look back and realize it was worth the wait.

PROVERBS 24:16

For though the
righteous fall seven
times, they rise again.

DAY 16

**GET
BACK
UP**

PROVERBS 24:16

DAY 16

Proverbs 24:16

For though the righteous fall seven times, they rise again.

| READ - JOHN 21:1-19

EMPTY
NETS.

HEAVIER
HEARTS.

It was a cold morning on the lake.

The kind of cold that sinks into your bones, especially after a long, sleepless night. The men in the boat were soaked, tired, and frustrated. They had fished all night and caught nothing.

Nothing

They weren't rookies. These were seasoned fishermen. This was their livelihood, their identity — before everything changed. Before they dropped their nets and followed a rabbi named Jesus.

Now, here they were again. Back where they started. Casting nets into the same waters, chasing fish instead of dreams. Their hopes had been shattered. Jesus was dead — or so they thought. So they returned to what was familiar. Something they could control.

As the first light of morning stretched across the water, they heard a voice from the shore.

"Did you catch anything?"

They squinted into the light. Just a shadowy figure standing there. Too far to see clearly. But something about the voice — something about it stirred something inside.

No. Nothing. Just empty nets and heavier hearts.

"Throw your net on the right side of the boat," the voice called back.

What a ridiculous suggestion. As if the fish were just waiting a few feet to the right. But they did it.

Suddenly, the net came alive — tugging, straining, overflowing with more fish than they could manage.

That's when Peter knew.

"It's the Lord!"

Only one person could do something like this. Only one person knew exactly where they were, even when they didn't know themselves.

Peter didn't wait. He didn't calculate. He jumped. Straight into the water, swimming hard to shore, leaving the miracle catch behind. It wasn't about the fish. It was about the One waiting by the fire.

Jesus was there — alive, risen, making breakfast.

They ate together in silence, smoke curling into the air, bread and fish crackling over the fire. Then Jesus turned and looked at Peter.

"Peter, do you love me? More than these?"

Here it was. The moment Peter had dreaded.

Just days before, Peter had made bold claims — swearing he would never abandon Jesus, even if everyone else did. But when the pressure came, when the night got long, Peter did exactly what he said he never would.

Three denials. A rooster crowing. A broken heart.

Peter had failed. Big.

And now Jesus was going to make him own it. But instead of rejection, Jesus offered something else. Grace. Restoration. A second chance.

He told Peter to feed His sheep — to get back to the calling, to get back up.

I WANTED TO DIE.

It's early in 2021. I remember staring out the window of my home office one night. The house was quiet. Everyone else was gone. Just me and my thoughts.

There's a field behind our house — big, open, peaceful. I looked out at it in the dark and imagined walking out there, falling to my knees ... and ending it all.

I didn't want to go on.

I had just lived and led through the hardest season of my life. Building campaigns, explosive church growth, family tensions, relational crisis, financial challenges, and the year of COVID had crushed me.

The confusion, the failures, the weight of life and leadership — it all felt like too much. I had battled anxiety, shame, anger, and insecurity for years, and somewhere along the way, despair took over.

And I was coping in unhealthy ways.

I told myself I'd bounce back soon. It wasn't a big deal, until it was.

I felt lost. Exposed. Humiliated. Shattered. A shell of the man I once was.

I was empty. No passion. No ability to fight back against all the darkness in me.

My thoughts were a runaway roller coaster. I couldn't turn my brain off.

You're a fraud and a failure.

You should give up.

You just suck; why would anyone want to follow you?

You're pathetic.

What's wrong with you?

Why are you so weak?

And finally ... Everyone would be better off without you. You should just die.

I told you it was dark.

I had preached grace for decades, but suddenly, I wasn't sure if that grace was for me.

What will happen if I'm honest and say what I'm really going through?

What if I say I need help?

What if I say out loud, "I'm broken and I don't know how to put the pieces back together"?

I figured God would still love me. He's God — it's kind of His thing.

But what about my wife?

My kids?

My church?

My friends?

Would they stick with me? Would they reach back with grace or reject me? Disgrace. That was the word I couldn't shake.

But in the silence, sitting at my desk staring out the window, I sensed something else. Not shame. Not condemnation.

Grace.

I felt God whisper to me — not audibly, but unmistakably:
I'm not finished with you. Get back up.
Those three words held me.

Get. Back. Up.

Receive the grace being offered.
Don't waste this pain.
Don't run from the work of change.
Get honest. Get help.

Get needy out loud.
Tell somebody.

SAY IT!

And ... Get back up. Maybe you've been there. Maybe you're there now. Sitting in shame. Numb from failure. Too exhausted to try again.

LOOK UP.

You are not alone.
You are not beyond grace.
You are not done.

Jesus still calls out across the water.
He still makes breakfast on the beach.
He still restores failures — and builds His Church with them.

So whatever you've done. Wherever you've been. No matter how far you've fallen.

Get back up. *God's not finished with you either.*

MATTHEW 13:44

The kingdom of heaven is like
treasure hidden in a field.
When a man found it, he hid it
again, and then in his joy went
and sold all he had and
bought that field.

DAY 17

**DREAM
AGAIN**

MATTHEW 13:44

DAY 17

Matthew 13:44

The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.

**Life has a way of squeezing
the dreams right out of us.
Pressure. Choices. Hard blows.
Painful realizations.**

We see tired faces in the mirror.
We wonder what could have been.
A passionless marriage. A dead-end career.
The daily grind.

And before long, we find ourselves living in the land of *Settle*.

I guess this is just the way it is. The way it will always be.

We trade the way it could be for the way it *is*.

But here's the truth: It's not foolish to imagine, to hope, to dream of a better future. It's courageous.

Still, it doesn't always feel that way, does it?

Sometimes the realities of life make dreaming feel like entitlement we can't afford.

Comfort calls us back from the edge.
If I take the risk, I'll just get hurt again.
If I say this out loud, people will laugh.
All I see are obstacles — all the reasons why it can't happen.

And so faith and hope feel like pipe dreams, relics tossed into the junkyard of high expectations.

THE TREASURE IN THE FIELD

Matthew 13:44

The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.

PICTURE IT

A man is just walking along, living his ordinary life. Maybe he's settled into his place in the world — a decent job, a wife who loves him, a couple of kids, even a two-car garage. Not exactly what he dreamed of as a young man, but hey, it could be worse.

Still, deep inside, he knows this isn't the life he once imagined. Not bigger in a material sense, but bigger in meaning. And then, one day, he sees something. Something shiny in the field. The way it catches the light stops him in his tracks.

What is that?

The field is empty, even up for sale. Why not take a look? He walks over. His heart races. This isn't just shiny — this is valuable.

He kneels down, brushing away dust. Digging around it like an archaeologist uncovering history. And slowly, something spectacular emerges. ***Something priceless.***

Do the owners not know it's here? Did someone bury it for safekeeping? Did they die before telling anyone?

For a moment, he thinks, I could just take it. But he's no thief. Besides, as he digs, he realizes there's more under the surface — too much to grab and run. Too heavy. Too large. This treasure is going to cost him. And that's the point. The story isn't just about value, it's about the courage to risk comfort to secure something greater.

THE SPACE BETWEEN

It's also about something I call *the space between*.

That place between where you are and where you could be.
Between settling and seeing the dream again.

Here's the funny thing: God made us the only creatures on earth who can imagine and create the future.

We can picture a better tomorrow.
Your dog can't do that. (*Which is great for living in the moment but terrible for building a life.*)

So dream.
Dream again.

Close your eyes for a moment.
What could life look like one year from now? Three? Five? Ten?

Where are you? Who's with you?

- ▶ Walking across the stage with a college degree?
- ▶ Laughing over dinner with your grown kids?
- ▶ Starting a new job — or even a new career?
- ▶ Running a 5K?
- ▶ Adopting a child?
- ▶ Living debt-free?
- ▶ Feeling spiritually alive and strong?
- ▶ Helping a ministry or nonprofit change your city?

I believe God plants dreams inside every one of us.
Maybe you've buried yours. Maybe you've given up on it entirely.

But what if you dusted it off?

What if — like the man in the field — you realized it's worth the risk?

Worth trading predictability and comfort for something priceless?

That's the invitation: to step into the space between. To see the dream again. To go after the treasure.

Is there a dream you have put on hold?

Is it time to chase it again?

Write down what you see:

What is the dream you have put on hold?

[illegible]

LUKE 9:51

As the time approached
for him to be taken up to
heaven, Jesus ***resolutely*** set
out for Jerusalem.

DAY 18

GRIT

LUKE 9:51

DAY 18

Luke 9:51

As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem.

Endurance is what sets people apart. It's not about who gets there first — it's about who's still standing at the end. Attrition weeds people out.

And assuming you're on the right path, the ability to hang on when others quit is what wins.

You see grit in the mom who pulls out her laptop after the kids are asleep to finish that degree she started years ago. You see it in the couple who commit to counseling even when everyone else says it's hopeless.

It's the addict who shows up at another meeting, inching toward sobriety. It's the slow work of rebuilding trust — *drop by drop* — instead of running off to find new friends who don't know your past.

It's paying a little extra on that student loan each month when it would be easier to stick with the minimum. It's showing up for your struggling kid, even when you're exhausted. Even when your patience is paper-thin.

We live in a world where commitment is old-fashioned and loyalty is undervalued.

But flip through Scripture — **or even look around your own life** — and you'll see the same truth over and over: Anything worthwhile is built on grit and determination.

The ones who made a difference set their face toward a better future — and kept going.

**THE ONES WHO
MADE A
DIFFERENCE SET
THEIR FACE
TOWARD A BETTER
FUTURE**

NEHEMIAH 2:18

They replied,
"Let us start rebuilding."
So they began
this good work.

DAY 19

TOGETHER

NEHEMIAH 2:18
ECCLESIASTES 4:9-12

Nehemiah 2:18

I also told them about the gracious hand of my God on me and what the king had said to me. They replied, "Let us start rebuilding." So they began this good work.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up.

But pity anyone who falls, and has no one to help them up.

Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. but how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.

I grew up in the 80s.

And honestly, it was a great time to be alive.

It was the decade of action-movie heroes. Rambo and Chuck Norris. Arnold and Maverick. Almost always, the story was the same: one man on a mission to save the world. One guy standing against all the bad guys ... and somehow coming out on top.

Those stories are fun to watch, but the subliminal messages sink deeper than we realize.

Be the hero.

It's all up to you.

You don't need anyone else.

Put it all on your shoulders.

You got this.

But the truth is, **one is too small a number for greatness.**

No one does anything of real significance alone.

An estimated **400,000** people worked on the Apollo missions. Hundreds of thousands of people we've never heard of. Engineers. Technicians. Mathematicians. Support staff. Janitors. Administrators. Each one playing an indispensable role in one man walking on the moon.

Long before the moon landing, a man named Nehemiah arrived in Jerusalem from Babylon.

He was born into captivity and had never seen the city of his ancestors. As a child, his grandparents told him stories of the city's past glory. But now, Jerusalem lay desolated, her walls broken down. In the ancient world, a city without walls was no city at all — defenseless, crime-ridden, without identity or future. And it had been this way for decades.

When Nehemiah heard about the state of the city, he wept. He fasted and he prayed.

Then he stepped out in bold faith and asked the king for help. And God answered. The king sent Nehemiah with authority and resources to rebuild.

It's tempting to read this story and assume Nehemiah is the hero. Cue the 80s action music. Explosions in the background.

But he isn't.

The people are the heroes.

The families.

The neighbors.

The team — together.

Nehemiah 2:18: *They replied, 'Let **us** start rebuilding.'* So they began this good work.

The chapters that follow list name after name — specific families, specific sections of wall, specific gates — described in detail. Everyone had a part.

Because if even one person didn't do their job, the wall was useless.

Despite opposition, threats, and setbacks, the wall was completed in days. What lay in ruins for decades was rebuilt in less than two months.

Why?

Because they pulled together. Not one lone hero charging ahead, but families serving side by side. Day by day. Small acts of obedience. Ordinary people committing to something bigger than themselves.

This is a powerful reminder for us.

The Bible calls the Church the body. It is connected. Interdependent. Every part is necessary.

The human body has around 600 muscles, and it takes about 200 of them, working in unison, just to take a single step forward.

No muscle gets to say, "I've got this on my own." We need each other. Jesus is the head — the one in charge, the source of direction and life. We move at his impulse. We submit to him, and we submit to one another, not out of weakness but out of trust.

Big missions don't require lone heroes.

They require united teams.

People who refuse the lie that they have to do everything themselves.

People willing to serve faithfully in small moments.

People who link arms when times are hard and keep building anyway.

Together.

EVERY PART MATTERS

If even one person didn't do
their job, the wall was
useless.

GALATIANS 6:9

We will reap a harvest if
we do not give up.

DAY 20

REWARDS

GALATIANS 6:9

Galatians 6:9

We will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

Most of the time, I tend to focus on the part in this verse about not giving up. And I'm obviously into endurance. I love the working through all kinds of hardship.

But lately, I've been thinking more about the harvest.

Harvest is about rewards. The payoff for hard work.

And here's the truth: Rewards matter. They play an important role in life — and in the Bible.

The New Testament describes five types of crowns that believers can receive, each symbolizing different aspects of service and faithfulness. Crowns for remaining faithful during persecution, sharing the Gospel, leading in the church, eagerly waiting for the return of Jesus, and living a righteous life.

Right now, I'm experiencing some different kinds of rewards.

As an empty nester, my marriage is stronger, more fun, and more exciting than it's ever been. The years of hard work — date nights, fighting fair, sacrificing for each other, investing in time away just the two of us — have paid off. That's a reward.

Rewards motivate us.

The prize. The crown.

They pull us forward.

We hope that all the effort, all the discipline, all the sacrifice will result in something good. And there's nothing wrong with that. In fact, that's how God wired us.

But here's what I've noticed: Sometimes we downplay rewards.

We say things like:

"I'm just doing this for God."

"I'm just doing this because it's the right thing to do."

And sure, that's true. But let's not forget that God gives good gifts. He wants us to experience rewards. And not just "**participation trophies.**" Real rewards. Financial stability is often the reward of small, wise choices made over decades.

A close relationship with your kids comes from years of intentional love and presence. Success in your career often grows from diligence and faithfulness over time.

In the messy middle of life, it's easy to lose sight of why we're pushing through. The long nights, the tough conversations, the sacrifices no one else sees — it can feel like it's all for nothing. But it's not. There are good things waiting on the other side of discipline and hard work. Sometimes the reward is something you can hold in your hands: financial security, a healthy body, a restored relationship.

Other times it's less visible but just as valuable: the strength of character you've built, the wisdom you've gained, the resilience you didn't know you had. Either way, the harvest is real. And when you keep that in mind, it fuels you to keep moving forward when everything in you wants to quit.

1 Corinthians 3:13–14

But on the judgment day, fire will reveal what kind of work each builder has done. The fire will show if a person's work has any value. If the work survives, that builder will receive a reward.

PSALM 145:4

One generation
commends
your works to another;
they tell of
your mighty act.

DAY 21

LEGACY

PSALM 145:4
2 TIMOTHY 2:2

DAY 21

Psalm 145:4

One generation commends your works to another; they tell of your mighty acts.

2 Timothy 2:2

And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.

The changes I've made over the last 1,000 days aren't just for me.
They're for legacy.
They're for everyone my life touches.

- ▶ **For my wife.**
- ▶ **For my son.**
- ▶ **For my daughter.**
- ▶ **For my daughter-in-law.**
- ▶ **For my grandchildren.**
- ▶ **For my friends.**
- ▶ **For my team.**
- ▶ **For my church.**
- ▶ **For my community.**

None of this exists in isolation. My life doesn't either.

I'm planting trees I'll never sit under.
But they will.

That's what legacy is.

Legacy isn't a statue or a plaque. It's not fame.

It's a name.

It's a reputation.

It's the wake your life leaves behind.

One day, I'll be gone. That's just the way life works. And what remains won't be my résumé or my accomplishments. It will be a fading memory — how I made people feel, how I showed up, what I gave. The opportunities I helped create through thousands of quiet, ordinary choices.

Legacy is rarely built in big heroic moments.

It's built day by day.

Decision by decision.

In small moments of serving something bigger than ourselves.

We all stand in someone else's legacy. The world we live in — the opportunities we've been given, the paths available to us — is the result of choices someone else made long before we arrived.

I remember one afternoon when my son was in high school. I was standing on the sideline, watching him practice football. The campus was stunning — a prestigious, elite private school that honestly looked a bit like Hogwarts. He was thriving. In the classroom. On the field. That year, his team went on to win a state championship.

It was an incredible opportunity. And then it hit me.

When my dad was 15 years old, he couldn't have imagined this scene in his wildest dreams.

**I'M
PLANTING
TREES**

**I'LL
NEVER
SIT
UNDER.**

Growing up in extreme poverty in Georgia, my father left high school early and joined the Army — not for glory, but for survival. He wanted out. He wanted something better. After serving, he used his military benefits to finish school. He married my mom. They started a family. He became a teacher. And for my entire childhood, he worked two jobs.

Not because he was chasing some heroic story, but because he was willing to sacrifice.

Over and over again.

He made small, often unseen decisions to give his kids a different life than the one he had. And he did it. He could not fathom the opportunities my children, his grandchildren, now have. And their children will have. He just decided he wanted something different, and he carved out a foundation for us to stand on. That's legacy.

And that's the invitation for all of us. You don't need to be extraordinary. You just need to be faithful.

DAY BY DAY.

You can do this too.

Most of us think legacy is something you leave behind when your life is over. But legacy isn't the final chapter — it's being written every day. Legacy isn't about being remembered by a lot of people. It's about being remembered accurately by the right ones. It's not your résumé or your highlight reel. It's what lives on in others because of how you lived.

Your legacy is formed in ordinary moments. In how you treat people when no one is watching. In what you prioritize when life gets busy. In the habits you repeat and the values you refuse to compromise. Long before anyone tells your story, you are teaching it.

Here's the uncomfortable truth: You don't get to choose whether you leave a legacy. You only get to choose what kind. Influence is unavoidable. The question is whether it's intentional.

One day, the results of your life will keep moving without you. Your words will echo in someone else's decisions. Your example will shape what they believe is normal, possible, or worth pursuing. That's legacy.

So live in a way that makes the handoff worthwhile. Build what will outlast you. Invest in people, not just outcomes. Choose faithfulness over flash. Because in the end, legacy isn't what you leave for people — it's what you leave *in* them.

In the Bible, legacy is rarely about being remembered. It's about being faithful.

Scripture doesn't spotlight people because they were impressive, but because they were obedient. Most of the men and women God used never saw the full impact of their lives. They planted seeds they would never harvest. They took steps of faith without knowing the ending.

Hebrews 11 tells story after story of people who "died in faith, not having received the things promised." That's a sobering thought — and a freeing one. Their legacy wasn't that they finished the work. Their legacy was that they were faithful with the part they were given.

Biblical legacy is generational. God is consistently described as "the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." Notice the pattern. God's work moves forward through people, families, and generations. No one carries the whole story alone.

Understanding the long game reframes success. In God's economy, legacy isn't about how much you build, but how well you hand things off. It's not about making a name for yourself, but passing on faith, wisdom, courage, and obedience to the people coming behind you.

Jesus modeled this better than anyone. He didn't write a book, build a building, or lead an organization meant to last forever. Instead, He invested deeply in a few people, knowing they would carry the message beyond any place He ever could physically go.

His legacy wasn't an institution—it was transformation multiplied.

Biblical legacy asks a different set of questions:

Who is stronger in their faith because of me?

Who is walking closer to God because I walked with them?

What will continue to grow long after I'm gone?

**HIS LEGACY
WASN'T AN
INSTITUTION**

**IT WAS
TRANSFORMATION
MULTIPLIED.**

MEET SCOTTY

Scotty Priest is the lead pastor of Journey Church Colorado, a thriving church with multiple locations across South Denver. For nearly two decades, Scotty has faithfully led with vision, humility, and a deep passion for helping people take their next step with Jesus.

With more than 30 years of ministry experience, Scotty is known for his practical teaching, steady leadership, and genuine love for people. Whether preaching, mentoring leaders, or simply listening over coffee, his heart is the same: helping people discover the life Jesus invites them into — one step, one habit, one faithful day at a time.

Scotty and his wife, Amy, live in Castle Pines, Colorado. They've been married for almost 30 years and are proud parents, grandparents, and passionate believers in building strong families, meaningful friendships, and lives marked by faithfulness over time.

He still believes the best transformations rarely happen overnight.

They happen slowly.

Quietly.

Day by day.



@scottypriest

VERSES

DAY 1. HEVEL

Ecclesiastes 1:1–2

DAY 2. SEEDOLOGY

Matthew 13:31–21

DAY 3. TAKE YOUR NEXT STEP

Psalms 119:105

Proverbs 3:5–6

DAY 4. THINK SMALL

Exodus 23:30

DAY 5. CONSISTENCY COMPOUNDS

Galatians 6:9

DAY 6. CRASHES AND COMEBACKS

Micah 7:8

Isaiah 61:3

DAY 7. JIU JITSU AND JESUS

Psalms 32:8

DAY 8. SOUL

Psalms 63:1

Matthew 6:9–13

DAY 9. MIND

Romans 12:2

Matthew 22:37

DAY 10. BODY

1 Corinthians 6:19–20

DAY 11. FAMILY

Joshua 24:15

DAY 12. FRIENDS

Proverbs 17:17

Proverbs 27:17

DAY 13. MONEY

Proverbs 3:9

DAY 14. SERVICE

John 13:3–5

DAY 15. DECADES, NOT DAYS

Hebrews 12:1–2

DAY 16. GET BACK UP

Proverbs 24:16

DAY 17. DREAM AGAIN

Matthew 13:44

DAY 18. GRIT

Luke 9:51

DAY 19. TOGETHER

Nehemiah 2:18

Ecclesiastes 4:9–12

DAY 20. REWARDS

Galatians 6:9

1 Corinthians 3:13–14

DAY 21. LEGACY

Psalms 145:4

2 Timothy 2:2

Hebrews 11

BUILD A LIFE THAT LASTS.

Stop waiting. Start building.

The next 1,000 days will pass whether you make them count or not.

The question is, who will you become when they're gone?

Your life is shaped by what you do daily.

In this book, you'll take 21 intentional days to begin building something that actually lasts.

It won't be easy.

But it will be worth it.

- **A CONSISTENT CHARACTER**
- **A STRONGER FAMILY**
- **A LEGACY OF FAITH**